

**Proudly Serving the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Community**

## Desert Knight tests MEB's 'virtual battlefield' skills

By Cpl. Scott Whittington

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Exercise Desert Knight, a prelude to Exercise Steel Knight began aboard station Nov. 27 and included operations at 29 Palms, March Air Reserve Base and Camp Pendleton. Desert Knight is designed to test various units' capabilities in command and control of Marine-Expeditionary-Brigade-level contingencies.

Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38 supported the exercise here by providing the Aviation Combat Element commander a command post. "We validate the functionality of the ACE command post for the command and control of the ACE's units," said Lt. Col. Bart R. Gentry, commanding officer of MTACS-38, 3d Marine Air Wing. "We want to be ready and relevant."

By being ready, Gentry said he must have personnel and equipment ready to go anywhere in the world within 96 hours. By being relevant, he wants the ACE's Tactical Air Command Center sized and organized correctly to perform a viable service to the Ma-

rine Air Ground Task Force and the MEB commander.

Practically all Marine operations are conducted by a MAGTF, and this one was no different. A MAGTF is made up of a command element, an air combat element, ground combat element and combat service support element. It supports a Marine expeditionary unit, brigade or force.

During this evolution the GCE was the 7th Marines at 29 Palms; the ACE had elements of 3d MAW, including MTACS-38 and Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38; and the CSSE was the 1st Brigade Service Support Group at Camp Pendleton.



**Brig. Gen. Jim Battaglini, commanding general of 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, lands at an Exercise Desert Knight site aboard 29 Palms Wednesday. Photo by Cpl. Scott Whittington**

The MEB was headquartered aboard March ARB.

A MEB has around 14,000 Marines and Sailors and is larger than a MEU but smaller than a MEF. "The MEB is the premier response force for small scale contingencies," said Brig. Gen. Jim Battaglini, commanding

general of 1st MEB, quoting the words of General James L. Jones, Commandant of the Marine Corps. "The MEB can operate from amphibious ships or can link up with equipment provided by maritime pre-positioned

See **Desert Knight**, page 10

## Miramar's most wanted

### Reward offered for information leading to arrest of golf course vandals

By 2nd Lt. Joshua G. Rushing

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Marine Corps Community Services is offering a cash reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of a Thanksgiving-weekend attack on the Miramar Memorial Golf Course.

Vandals struck early morning Nov. 26 destroying two tractors, damaging greens and fairways, shattering vehicle windows, and smashing walls and doors of metal buildings.

Investigators at the Criminal Investigative Division are following a number of leads including fingerprints and footprints left by the offenders, said Joseph A. Sylvester, chief investigator at CID. "The investigation is ongoing and expected to be resolved expeditiously," he said.

Those caught will face numerous charges, the most egregious being for the wrongful destruction of government property. According to Sylvester, state agencies may also be involved in the investigation because of a state-owned weather station destroyed in the onslaught.

The night of destruction will

cost MCCS more than \$40,000, according to Rick Soule, assistant chief of staff for MCCS.

"That's money that was budgeted for other programs that help out the Marines here, such as birthday ball donations, barracks bashes or free concerts," said Soule. "It may mean that we don't have a free concert or a couple of barracks bashes to make up for it. That's unfortunate."

"I can't imagine they grasped how far reaching the damage they did out there on that course is going to be," Soule said.

Not only is it going to cost MCCS more than \$30,000 to repair and replace the damaged turf and equipment, but up to \$10,000, intended to benefit young Marines aboard the air station, will have to be redirected for security measures. "It's a sad commentary," said Soule.

The attack occurred sometime late that Saturday night or early Sunday morning. During the onslaught a clock was knocked off the wall and stopped at 1:58 a.m.

Maintenance crews checking into work discovered the damages Sunday morning. "The tractors had evidently been used as battering rams in some sort of demolition



**Mike Ernsberger, mechanic foreman at the golf course maintenance section, points out some of the damage from a Nov. 26 attack on the golf course. Marine Corps Community Services is offering a cash reward to anyone who provides information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the vandals that caused more than \$40,000 in damage. Photo courtesy of Miramar Memorial Golf Course**

derby," said Steve Parker, golf course superintendent. Several metal buildings had walls and doors smashed by the tractors.

They were also driven on the golf course where they left wheel ruts on the 18th hole's tee box and 1st hole's fairway and green. "They just could not have realized how sensitive that grass is and how much it costs to take care of it," said Soule. The maintenance budget for the course is \$900,000.

"This golf course is considered one of the finest in the area," said Soule. "Its greens are kept in excellent condition. And we had

planned \$10,000 in improvements, but the money to fix this has to come from somewhere."

After the vandals' joy ride they dumped the tractors in the middle of the pond on the 18th hole, said Parker. A number of other tractor-like vehicles were damaged in the assault. Two were totaled beyond repair.

Vandals also shattered windows to the Youth Center's van and caved in fenders on two trucks used by golf course and Officer Club maintenance crews, which were parked in the golf course parking lot. Also damaged or destroyed

were irrigation controllers for the course and a weather station owned by the state.

To report information on the events of that night, or for information on the reward, call Investigators Sylvester or Alan Freeman at (858) 577-4060 or 577-4452.

## Features

**Their better than your average meteorologists** page 6

**In, out – ATC keeps flights on track, on time** page 7



## Quality of Life (Part III)

# Avoid pitfalls of mortgage, rental contracts through Family Housing

**Editor's note:** Today, there are more Marine family members than there are active duty Marines. Former Secretary of Defense William Perry said, "Our people in uniform are walking investments. If we lose them, we've lost a valuable asset and hurt readiness in a very fundamental way. The main factor in retention is quality of life, not only for troops, but also their families." He went on to assert that housing is fundamental to quality of life. Military housing poses a unique challenge in the San Diego area. The following is the final installment in a three-part series of highlighting the dynamic housing situation here. This story focuses on the programs available to help Miramar Marines become homeowners.

By 2nd Lt. Joshua G. Rushing

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

If you are renting, as is your faithful author, then you are losing money with every rent check you write – as is, rather unfortunately, your faithful author.

"It's a no-brainer. If you're paying rent, then your paying someone else's mortgage," said Chuck Dudley, real estate counselor at the Military Family Housing Office for San Diego.

Dudley is a retired master chief petty officer who served more than 31 years in the Navy, three of which were spent as the command master chief for Military Family Housing. He is also a licensed real estate agent, member of the California and San Diego associations of realtors, and a Veterans Administration Home Loans Specialist. He is immensely qualified to help you buy a home, and, best of all, he is free. Or at least his services are free for military families in the San Diego area through the Military Housing Office at Naval Station San Diego.

There are several good reasons to buy a home. The first is your mortgage payment serves as a scheduled savings plan. With each payment you make, equity in your home grows. Equity is how much of the home you, vice the loan company, actually own. It can be borrowed against and can be converted into cash by selling the home.

Another good reason to buy a home is the tax advantages it gives homeowners. For example, all the interest you pay on your mortgage, which is the majority paid in the first couple of years, is tax deductible. So, you will save a significant amount annually

on your federal income tax. Also, in California homeowners get a \$7,000 exemption on state taxes.

Possibly one the best reasons to buy a home in the San Diego area is the market. While nothing in finances is guaranteed, home values are very unlikely to depreciate. If history holds, home prices will continue to increase. And if recent history persists, then home prices will increase rapidly.

Such was the case for Master Sgt. Dwaine Roberts, "When I first moved here I paid \$1,000 a month to live in a two room shack with roaches." When the public affairs chief started looking at homes to buy he saw one in Mira Mesa for \$177,000 and after renting for 10 months, the same house had gone up to \$215,000. "I paid \$230,000 for a similar house, and could have saved \$50,000 if I had bought when I first got here."

The story is even better for the seller of Robert's home, who had purchased it less than three years before for \$167,000. "He walked away from closing with about \$45,000," Roberts said. That's the power of an explosive market, such as San Diego.

One more good reason to buy is while the cost of rent continues to rise in San Diego; your mortgage payment will remain unchanged. And because of the effect of inflation you will pay the same mortgage and interest with ever-"cheaper" dollars.

There are some possible drawbacks to buying a home. One such disadvantage is that housing costs will generally be higher for a homeowner than a renter. Even if your mortgage payments are less than your rent, you will have to pay for all maintenance, property taxes, homeowner's insurance and,

possibly, homeowners association fees.

Speaking of maintenance costs, if you own a home there is no landlord to call to fix the plumbing. This may be another drawback to buying. Homeowners generally have to work more on their investments. Either you will have to learn to fix the pipes or pay for a plumber yourself.

One last deterrent to buying is the possibility of seriously botching your financial future for a long time. If you fail to keep up with your mortgage payments, the lender can sell the property. You not only lose your home but your good credit and any equity you had in the property.

If you've read this far, then you're probably interested in buying. To purchase a home you need four things.

First is a steady job history for at least two years. This basically means that you have consistently received a paycheck of equal value or more for the last 24 months. There are some exceptions that lenders will consider – one being if you recently left the military.

Second, you need an established and favorable credit profile to prove that you make good on your debts and pay your bills on time. If you haven't had any credit cards or taken out any loans, then you may be able to show a positive credit history through non-traditional means, such as showing you paid your rent, electricity, water, cable, etc. on time. This doesn't mean if you've ever been late on a payment that you can never buy a home. You will probably have to explain any glitches in your credit report to the lender.

If you have had any seriously negative credit problems, like a foreclosure or bankruptcy, it's possible that you will have to wait about three years before you'll be approved for a mortgage.

Next, you need some savings. Most loans require 5 to 10 percent down, which on a \$200,000 home is \$10,000 to \$20,000. Servicemembers can apply for a VA loan, which is zero down. "That's the beauty of the VA, you don't need a down payment," said Dudley. Even with a VA loan it is a good idea to have at least \$5,000 in reserve for closing costs and fees associated with obtaining a mortgage. One difficulty with a VA loan in San Diego is that the median house here costs \$269,000, but the VA will only approve up to \$203,000. However, a bill is in Congress to increase that limit to \$252,700.

If you do have a healthy savings account, you may want to consider getting a California Veterans loan. It requires at least 3 percent down, but it drops 2 percent off the going interest rate. The maximum loan amount for a CalVet home loan in San Diego County is just over \$217,000.

The last thing you'll need is enough gross monthly income to be approved for the monthly mortgage payments for the home you want. Generally, that payment is limited

## Flight Jacket



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## Jaws of the law

Rex, a Belgium Malinois and military working dog, takes down Cpl. William Abbott, dog handler with the Provost Marshal's Office here, during a K-9 demonstration at Mira Mesa High School, Nov. 29. At the demonstration,

both handler and dog get a chance to show off their teamwork, training skills, obedience and aggressiveness. The military police use working dogs to assist in duties such as patrolling and searching, detecting and seizing narcotics and explosives.

Photo by Cpl. Scott Whittington

See **Housing**, page 11



## Mir Remarks

Has your family been naughty or nice this past year?



Photo by Cpl. Mike Camacho

**“My family was really nice this past year. They always support and encourage me to do the best I can.”**

*Cpl. Lennox A. Smith,  
Headquarters and Headquarters  
Squadron, food service specialist*



Photo by Cpl. Mike Camacho

**“They’ve been nice. I mean it hasn’t been a real good year for us, but we’ve all supported each other.”**

*Joyce A. Lambert,  
family member*



Photo by Cpl. Mike Camacho

**“It’s been a little been of both. I’ve been deployed so that was hard, but when my wife and I are together it’s great, especially during the holidays.”**

*Sgt. Marcus E. Moss,  
Electronics Warfare Training Group  
Pacific, communications instructor*

## Tight election teaches us a

# Valuable voting lesson

By Sgt. Maj. Stephen H. Mellinger

*Marine Forces Pacific Sergeant Major*

Active duty military personnel who choose to get inappropriately involved in civilian politics of our nation could find themselves in “hot water.”

For example, a few years ago an active duty Marine officer learned that talking trash (via e-mail) about our president publicly resulted in him being punished under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Our president, regardless of his political affiliation, is our commander in chief who we are to be unquestionably loyal. Our unquestioned loyalty and commitment to our president and commander in chief is not to that individual personally, but rather to the office.

It doesn’t matter if our nation’s leader is a Republican or Democrat, is or isn’t pro military, or is or isn’t in favor of a pay raise for us. Every military member has sworn an oath to be faithful to the individual elected to lead us. And as long as that person holds that office, they will have unquestioned loyalty from those of us still in uniform.

It’s no different than our not having a choice in obeying only Marine Corps policies we like. We follow them all. Nor can we choose which battles and wars we will fight. Our commander in chief and other elected officials make those critical decisions, and we carry out our orders.

Our main concern as Marines should be

that when the ‘911 phone rings,’ we are well trained and ready to respond to that call. And we will complete whatever mission is given to us by our president to the highest standards our country expects from Marines.

It’s so easy to sit back and throw darts at those elected individuals in charge of our government. They make easy targets for our criticism when they make unpopular decisions affecting our loved ones and us.

Even though political involvement by active duty personnel is restricted, we most definitely have an equal right to participate by voting for our candidate. I believe it’s not only our right, but our obligation and duty as citizens to include our say in who (local, state and federal) will represent our ideals and us.

As we watch the present election events unfold, I’m sure most of us just shake our head at all that is taking place to select our next president. I wonder how many of us are asking ourselves, “What if I would have voted? Especially if you’re from Florida. Would my one vote have made a difference?”

I suspect this current presidential election will actually be good for our country once all the smoke clears. This election has put a lot of teeth into the saying, “Every vote counts.”

Hopefully every individual, military or civilian, that did not vote this time will have a different view in future elections.

Less than 50 percent of those Americans eligible to vote did so this year. The sad fact

is that this is about normal for every federal election. I think that’s a real shame seeing that we are supposed to be the greatest democracy in the world.

These elections are where we “little guys,” get to decide who will be our nation’s leaders by casting our vote.

As I said, less than half the eligible voters thought it wasn’t important enough to participate in selecting our next president. Yet, it seems that same 50 percent who didn’t vote are the first to chime in, complaining about how “bad” the elected leadership is that won.

One important point that I haven’t heard mentioned by the many lawyers and “political experts” is that if this were happening in numerous other countries, they might be settling things with bloodshed instead of by due process. I’m glad to know our democratic system is in good working order!

Also I always thought that little piece of paper that you punch out in a voting ballot was simply called trash. Man, was I mistaken. Like most of you, I learned that it’s a chad.

Like most Marines, I have a preference between the two presidential candidates as to who I want as my commander in chief, but just talking about it though doesn’t count. This year’s federal election has made it clear that we have to vote to make it happen.

Just remember when you vote next time, make sure you are familiar with those tricky little chads.

## Commentary



## Sergeant Major’s Corner



By Sgt. Maj. Ira J. Lott

*MCABWA Sergeant Major*

*All too often we hear the negative aspects of being a Marine or servicemember. If each and every one of us had an experience such as the one described by Sgt. Etienne Sullivan below, all the negativity would go out the window. Thank you Sgt. Sullivan for sharing your experience. But more importantly, thank you for being a Marine.*

A letter from Sgt. Etienne Sullivan:  
Marines and Friends,

I wanted to share an experience I had while I was on leave recently. I was hanging out with a former Marine buddy of mine and mentioned that I wanted to visit the Iwo Jima and Vietnam Memorials while I was home. I do my best to visit them every time I’m home or at least once a year. He said he wanted to go too and that I should wear my Blues. We went the next day. We visited the Iwo Jima Memorial, the new Korean Memorial, and ended at the Wall. We had both done very well to keep our composure. We did have one incident where we yelled at some kids playing tag around the base of our beloved Marine Corps Memorial, but that’s all.

We were standing near the center of the Wall, next to a mother and her 12-13 yr. old son. I noticed the tears in her eyes, but she was doing her best to hold them back. The boy pointed at me and asked his mother, “He’s a Marine like Uncle so-and-so, isn’t

he?”

She nodded. The boy walked up to the Wall, touched a name and returned.

He said, “Why is Uncle so-and-so’s name up there, again?”

Mom replied, “This is the Vietnam Memorial. All the people who died over there, are listed here.”

“It sure is a lot.”

“Yes Honey, it was a very horrible war.”

I looked at my buddy. His eyes were getting misty, as were mine. Then the kid tapped me on the sleeve. When I looked at him, he said something that I will never forget, “I’m still not sure what all this about, but thank you for being a Marine like my Uncle.” That’s when the three of us lost it. About 6 people around us quickly joined in. During the next fifteen minutes, I received more handshakes and thank-you’s than I can count. I was hugged by three people I had never met, and I smartly returned a few salutes to little ones. I have never felt more proud of being a Marine! Tears were streaming down my face, yet my chest was bigger than it was on Graduation Day.

It is very easy to get upset at the Corps when we see civilians making more money than us for the same job. It is easy to become disheartened when we haven’t seen our loved ones in who knows how long. It is easy to become disgruntled when we ask for East Coast and end up at Camp Pendleton instead. It is very easy to get caught up in our daily

See **Sgt. Maj.**, page 10



## Combined Federal Campaign

# FRC stands to protect military personnel, their families on Capitol Hill

**Editors note:** The following story is part of a continuing series spotlighting some of the many charities open to service members through the Combined Federal Campaign. The Department of Defense-wide 2000 CFC campaign began Sept. 25 and will end Dec. 15. With more than 1,700 charities, it is the largest campaign in the world and the San Diego area's drive is the second largest division of that campaign. According to Capt. Carl A. Maas, CFC officer, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, the drive is on pace to match last year's success, but its challenge is to inform deployed service members about the drive and give them the opportunity to give. Marines aboard ships, at Combined Arms Exercises, at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, and on temporary additional duties are the ones who haven't heard about the campaign yet and Maas urges everyone to get the word out.

Courtesy of Jacquelyn Ostrom

NHA Clipsheet

There is an effort in Washington to help American servicemembers and their families receive protection just as they have protected and promoted peace around the world. Family Research Council, the leading pro-military-family organization in Washington, has consistently worked on a broad range of issues impacting military families and military readiness.

Leading the way at FRC is retired Lt. Col. Robert L. Maginnis, USA. Maginnis and his team continue to testify before Congress, promoting debate on many military readiness issues on major national television and radio shows and in newspapers.

They have represented thousands of ac-

tive and retired members before the courts, in the policy arena, and in the media. FRC continues to walk the halls of power in Washington ensuring that public policy concerning military affairs is beneficial to all military families across our nation.

The Military Readiness Project, a division of Family Research Council, acts on the conviction that the military's primary objective should be to preserve readiness for war.

To this end, MRP opposes efforts to lift the ban on homosexuals serving in the military, to place women in combat roles, and other "social experiments" that threaten to degrade our military's ability to preserve our national security.

FRC's Military Readiness Project is one of the most effective movements engaged in military personnel issues, working to halt the

pervasive social engineering that afflicts our armed forces. By instituting MRP, the Family Research Council has embraced and continually underscores what every good soldier knows — a strong military means a strong America.

For in-depth research, analysis, commentary and news, you can go to [www.frc.org/military](http://www.frc.org/military) and access policy papers and the One Minute Briefing, which outlines important facts about various aspects of military readiness. Join FRC in their efforts to provide a powerful voice for America's selfless patriots. Con-



Retired Lt. Col. Robert Maginnis meeting with Ed Bradley of 60 Minutes prior to an interview that was aired on national television. Photo courtesy of Family Research Council

tact the Family Research Council at (800) 225-4008, or write to 801 G Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. The Family Research Council participates in the Combined Federal Campaign.

## Youth's Civil War wish fulfilled at Gettysburg

Courtesy of Jacquelyn Ostrom

NHA Clipsheet

Mike Etherington is a well-rounded young man with a variety of interests. His hobbies include ice hockey, auto mechanics, photography, and music. But more than anything, he is a Civil War history buff.

As he was recovering from his treatment, wish granters from the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Utah visited Mike's home, and offered him the opportunity to make one wish.

Deciding on his most heartfelt wish was not an easy decision for Etherington, but his love for history was the determining factor.

Mike decided that he wanted to visit Gettysburg, a wish that in his mom's opinion, was a natural choice for him.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation graciously assisted in creating an unforgettable wish experience for him. He watched a three-day reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg, 169 years to the day of the original battle.

He was given a complete Civil War uniform, along with a role in the reenactment. A personal guide took the young man to visit actual Civil War sites. During his incredible week-long stay, he participated in a living history exposition, in Civil War Heritage Days, and the

Adams County 200th Anniversary Celebration.

All of the activities were so enjoyable that both he and his mom agreed that Mike's Gettysburg experience exceeded even their highest expectations.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses to enrich the human experience with hope, strength, and joy. The Foundation has granted a wish to more than 80,000 children around the world since being founded in 1980. For more information, contact your local chapter, visit the Make-A-Wish Web site at [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org), or call (800)722-WISH.



Mike's wish to visit Gettysburg turned out to be much more than just a visit, he was an active participant in the Battle of Gettysburg, 169 years to the day of the original battle. Photo courtesy of Make-A-Wish Foundation

## American families know a strong military means a strong America.

Protecting the vitality of America's armed forces is the chief aim of the Military Readiness Project of **Family Research Council**. We are one of the largest organizations engaged on military personnel issues, and we work to halt the pervasive social engineering that afflicts our armed forces. We represent thousands of active and retired service members before the courts, policy makers, and the media, and we fight daily for the time-tested traditional values that have made America great.



1-800-225-4008  
[www.frc.org](http://www.frc.org)



a CFC participant

## "You have faced your personal challenges with bravery and honor..."

— Gen. James L. Jones, Commandant, United States Marine Corps



When 5-year-old Tyler was granted his wish, it wasn't just that he became only the 15th honorary Marine in the history of the Corps. When he decked out in fatigues and spent 2 days with his heroes riding in helicopters, flight simulators and armored vehicles, Tyler was filled with hope, strength, and joy. He is still making plans for the future. Thanks.

Find out how you can  
Share the power of a wish<sup>SM</sup>.

**MAKE-A-WISH.**

Visit us at [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org) or call (800) 722-WISH

### Celebrity Golf shootout

The San Diego Chapter of Toys For Tots is looking for motivated Marines to volunteer to assist with our Celebrity Golf Shootout Saturday and Sunday at Admiral Baker Field Golf Course.

Volunteers will muster at the Navy-Marine Corps Reserve Training Center, 9955 Pomerado Road, San Diego at 6:00 a.m. both days for transportation to and from the golf course. The uniform for this event is camouflage utilities. Volunteers should coordinate within their respective units and provide a list of personnel, with a point of contact, to Gunnery Sgt. Helms at DSN 577-8066 or e-mail: [helmsr@mfr.usmc.mil](mailto:helmsr@mfr.usmc.mil).

### Looking for a few good women

A female drill team is now being formed. If you are interested in joining, please call Lance Cpl. McIntyre at 577-1329. The first meeting is scheduled for Jan. 9 at the Great Escape.

### Blood Drive

MCAS Miramar Branch Medical Clinic, in association with the Naval Medical Center, San Diego is sponsoring a Blood Drive on Dec. 20 and Dec. 29, from 9:00-2:00 p.m. at the Miramar Exchange.

Accidents during the Holiday Season often put an increased demand on blood supply. This increase, along with already low blood supplies, makes the need for donations all the more critical.

For more information, please contact Petty Officer 2nd Class Raoul Omano, at the Branch Medical Clinic, 577-9855 or 577-9836.

### New Parent Support Program

The Parent Support Program is currently hosting a 'play morning event' the third Thursday of each month from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Admiral Baker Recreation Area.

There will be crafts, snacks and toys available for participants. To register or get directions call 577-9812.

### BMC holiday hours announced

During the Christmas holiday period the Branch Medical Clinic will be open normal hours with reduced personnel. The BMC will be closed Dec. 25 -26, Jan. 1-2. Acute care will be available. During this period a duty medical officer will be onboard from 7:30

a.m.-12:00 p.m. daily. The pharmacy department will follow the same holiday schedule with normal hours resuming Jan. 2. Any servicemembers needing 'up-chits' should arrange for them early in the month of Dec.

Normal hours of operation are: Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. and Friday 7:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. The clinic is closed weekends and holidays. Telephone: 577-9961. Refills: (619) 532-8418. Other holiday closures are Jan. 1, 2001 for New Year's Day, Jan. 15 for Martin Luther King's birthday, Feb. 19 for President's Day and May 28 for Memorial Day.

### PMO cracks down on racing

A concern has risen pertaining to off-base racing. A large number of Marines are being stopped, ticketed and fined for racing.

The San Diego Police Department requested the assistance of Miramar Military Police to help curb Marines' involvement in illegal racing. Marines involved in racing may not be aware of other criminal activities that accompany racing. These activities include illegal gambling, assaults, stabbings, shootings and other gang activity. If Marines are caught racing, they could be arrested and their cars impounded. The associated legal and impound fees could cost a Marine thousands of dollars.

In an effort to ensure the safety of Marines, the Provost Marshal's Office will work with SDPD, targeting known racing areas. At the SDPD's discretion, identified Marines, stopped for racing, may be turned over to the PMO and possibly charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

### MMOA Brief

The annual MMOA "Road show" Brief will be held from 8:00-10:00 a.m., Dec. 12 at the Station Theater.

The purpose is to brief all Marine officers on assignment policies, procedures, promotion, career patterns, and retention information that will affect their careers. Immediately following the MMOA brief, there will be a restricted officer brief from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. for all LDOs and Warrant Officers. Third MAW will host a social event for the MMOA visit at the MCAS Miramar Officers' Club on Dec. 12 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. This is a great opportunity to talk to the monitors in an informal environment. A cash bar and hors d'oeuvres will be available.



The Toys for Tots Program is hosting a five and eight kilometer run to raise toys for Christmas.

It is scheduled for Dec. 16 at 8:00 a.m. here. The start and finish line is in front of the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Bldg. 8380. Runners are asked to bring an unwrapped toy for the program. Register before Monday to avoid late fees, or register day of event starting at 6:30 a.m. See more info online at [www.mccsmiramar.com](http://www.mccsmiramar.com), or register at [http://www.active.comevent\\_detail.cfm?event\\_id=243801](http://www.active.comevent_detail.cfm?event_id=243801). The event is sponsored by the San Diego USO, (619) 235-6503.





# Forecasting the Future

## Weather Service mission vital to 3d MAW success

By Cpl. Micheal O. Foley  
CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Photo Illustration by Sgt. David Hercher

**W**ithout the aid of a crystal ball, the Marines of Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron's Weather Service provide sound predictions that the Marines of 3d Marine Aircraft Wing can count on.

These Marine mediums tell pilots and aircrew what to expect when they are in the Southern California skies. Flight support is a big part of their job as they provide forecasts for every flight leaving Miramar. They also provide current conditions for the air traffic control tower to broadcast to aircraft in the area.

The observers and forecasters are responsible for more than just flight

support. In the event of severe weather, they must produce a forecast and warning in time for the station to protect its assets. In some cases it may be as simple as recording the temperature and issuing a heat flag condition to protect personnel. In other cases it may be as complicated as monitoring current conditions along with incoming thunderstorms and warning ordnance sections, cryogenics facilities and other sensitive equipment, according to Staff Sgt. Steven E. Brown, Miramar Weather Service staff noncommissioned officer in charge.

Miramar's weather observers and forecasters don't just look at the clouds

and guess what's going to happen next, according to Brown. Some of the most advanced weather detecting technology guides them through the process.

The section uses the Automated Surface Observing System, Next Generation Radar and Meteorological Integrated Data Display System among other technology. These tools allow these Marines to see satellite images of the entire globe, view continuously updating conditions,

and even detect lightning. Just about anything they need to construct a forecast they can find with this equipment, but one instrument is the most important.

"Our eyes are our best instruments," said Cpl. Alan G. Strealy, weather observer and forecaster in-training. "A good observer, with a hand-held wind measuring device and an aneroid barometer can get every visibility

See **Weather**, page 11



The USO of San Diego presents the 9th annual



**United States Navy and Marine Corps  
Holiday Band Concert**





**Saturday, 2:00 p.m.**  
 San Diego Civic Theatre  
 202 C Street  
 Downtown San Diego  
*This concert is free and open to the public*



**Donation of a new, unwrapped toy benefits the  
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 (619) 235-6503





Cpl. Jorge O. Reyes, weather technician, checks the weather service's automatic rain gauge to see if it is working properly. Reyes is responsible for maintaining all the weather instruments on the flight line. Photo by Cpl. Micheal O. Foley



# Pushing Tin

## **Air Traffic Controllers ensure 'everybody gets concrete'**

By Cpl. Scott Whittington

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Ninety feet above the ground inside a tower, or in a low-lit, cool room below, Marines ensure aircraft land safely here.

It's the mission of air traffic controllers to organize and expedite the flow of aircraft.

Air Traffic Control Marines go through a 16-week course at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., to learn what it takes to get aircraft on and off the ground without a hitch. Once they get to their first duty station as an ATC, it's nearly a year before they are qualified in their military occupational specialty.

There are currently 84 Marines in ATC for the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing here, 40 of which are MOS qualified. Furthermore, 20 of these are qualified for both the tower and radar branches.

"Our controllers are constantly training their replacements," said Gunnery Sgt. Anthony Sammartino, ATC crew chief here. "It's a never-ending cycle."

To establish consistency in training, there are nine former-military civilians who work in ATC here. With Marines changing duty stations, getting out of the Corps or just new to the MOS, these civilian trainers help with the perpetual transition are there to show them the ropes.

"Everyone in ATC has a great attitude toward the 3d MAW and helping them with their mission," added Sammartino. "Everybody gets concrete." That's pilot talk for landing safely.

To get aircraft safely airborne and back to earth, there are two branches of ATC. There are four positions in the radar room and seven in the tower.

Qualification requires three months of on-the-job training at each of the four stations inside the radar room. After spending time there, Marines move upstairs in the tower.

Meanwhile, pilots receive flight information from the clearance position in the radar room and are brought in for landing by the radar final controller. A coordinator keeps everyone informed and a supervisor monitors everyone in the room. If a problem should arise, the supervisor decides the best plan of action.

The main goal is to keep aircraft away from each other's space. Most aircraft must maintain at least a three-mile distance. "No two aircraft can occupy the same space at the same time," said Sammartino.

Up in the tower, the ATCs have a better view of the air traffic. They are able to visually see 360 degrees. There are two local control positions that control north and south. Helicopters use the north paths and jets use the south.

Another Marine is in charge of the flight data. He coordinates with other civilian airfields in the area. On a slow day, more than 200 flights leave and arrive here. On a busy day, more than 1,400 flights buzz the skies over the air station. With all that traffic, the flight data position is the busiest.

When planes finally land, it's the job of the ground controller to taxi planes around the flight line and landing strip and to clear all other ground traffic. He also contacts emergency vehicles and other personnel when there is a problem with an aircraft.

"You need both branches to land an aircraft," said Lance Cpl. Joel D. Dixon, air traffic controller. "It wouldn't have efficiency if we didn't."

With a few emergency exceptions, the airfield closes at midnight. The Marines that have worn earphones all day, listening to incoming and outgoing pilots, return to their respective homes.

"There are some days you want to tear out your hair," said Dixon. "But then there are some days you step back and see what you've accomplished and say, 'I am a air traffic control God.'"



Lance Cpl. Nathan Unger, H & HS air traffic controller, taxis a pilot around the flight line, while simultaneously clearing all ground traffic to make room for a safe landing. Photo by Cpl. Scott Whittington



Air traffic controllers spend their day or night shift inside the tower's cap, landing aircraft safely. Photo by Cpl. Scott Whittington



Competitive Spirit nets MWCS-38 Supply with a

## Surplus of Excellence

By Cpl. Tisha Carter

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

What is it that puts the United States Marine Corps on the cutting edge? Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38 Supply section Marines certainly know what it takes to set the pace and stay ahead of the pack. It all starts with highly-effective leadership and pumping out meritorious Marines, at least one every quarter for the last year.

"Competitiveness is in our blood," began Sgt. Theresa J. Wade-Sancho, platoon sergeant, as she described her section and what got it where it is. "We're constantly striving to outdo each other and working together to better ourselves."

Since Nov. 2, 1999, MWCS-38 supply section has awarded six meritorious promotions, two Marines of the quarter for the squadron and a noncommissioned officer of the quarter for the squadron, group, and wing levels.

Where is the foundation laid? Wade-Sancho attributes it to good staff NCOs and NCOs screening the Marines and ensuring they are proficient in their military occupational specialty and NCO knowledge.

"They have to walk the walk of an NCO already to even be considered," the confident sergeant proudly stated.

These Marines prove they aim for excellence. It doesn't matter what rank, age, or gender. The section has two Marines with perfect physical fitness test scores of 300. Ironically, one is a 40-year-old male gunnery sergeant and the other is a 21-year-old female corporal.

"With this range of perfection in leaders, we have no choice but to be best in all we do," boasted Wade-Sancho.

However, deep in the heart of this motivational recipe, lie two significant ingredients.

"All of my Marines' success can be contributed to the outstanding examples set by my two SNCOs," said 2nd Lt. Maranda D. Brown, officer-in-charge. "They work with all of the Marines in my section to maintain a family type atmosphere, while taking a personal interest in their well being and all around performance as United States Marines."

Gunnery Sgt. Chuck C. Grayer, warehouse chief, and Gunnery Sgt. Domingo F. Miclat, supply chief, are front-runners leading the supply section to success. Miclat's ethos on leadership: always set the example; always be approachable; and always strive to take care of Marines.

"We talk about team concept, and I relate it to them by saying that my success is a direct reflection of the hard work that they do," explained Miclat.

A key factor, Miclat doesn't attempt to micro-manage, he simply gives direction and sets deadlines. He lets his Marines know exactly what he expects of them. So there is no gray area. Above all, he's a stalwart for Marine tradition, he certainly doesn't leave his wounded.

"When they fall short, I find out why and try to help them to work through the road blocks," says Miclat.

As for Grayer, his strong point is his physical fitness and teaching skill.

"He may run us in the dirt for physical training, but when it comes to the PFT, they all agree it paid off with some of

the highest scores in the squadron," declared Miclat of his enthusiastic comrade.

The gunnery sergeants train their Marines to lead using the basics of drill to provide confidence. It gives them a form of confidence that reflects back in their work section as well as within each Marine individually.

"Gunnery Sgt. Grayer has spent countless hours working with these Marines on drill, and when the sun goes down, we turn on the lights in the warehouse," described Miclat of Grayer's infinite devotion to teaching drill.

All things considered, together in brotherhood MWCS-38 supply section holds its Marines to a higher standard and never settles for anything less than the best. It all goes back to what the Corps has proven throughout history — with teamwork and camaraderie, practically anything is possible.

Wade-Sancho summed up their year of meritorious success, "Without sincere caring and believing in ourselves and in each other, none of this would have happened." She concluded by saying that the Corps' push for competitiveness is key, and that being the best of the best is what makes Marines great.

**"They have to walk the walk of an NCO already to even be considered."**

*Sgt. Theresa J. Wade-Sancho, platoon sergeant*



### Who they are ...

Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38 has been training outstanding Marines. Since Nov. 2, 1999, the squadron's supply section has awarded six meritorious promotions, two Marines of the quarter for the squadron and a non-commissioned officer of the quarter for the squadron, group and wing levels. (Top row from left to right) Sgt. Russel Wolff – Meritorious promotion to sergeant, Nov. 2, 1999. Sgt. James Stiver – Marine of the Quarter, October 1999, meritorious promotion to corporal, Dec. 2, 1999, NCO of the Quarter for MWCS 38, MACG 38 and 3d MAW, October 2000, Meritorious promotion to sergeant, Oct. 2, 1999. (Bottom row from left to right) Cpl. Javier Yanes – Meritorious promotion to corporal, March 2, 2000. Cpl. Guadalupe Hernandez – Marine of the Quarter for April, 2000, meritorious promotion to corporal, June 2, 2000. Cpl. Jerroll Arana – Meritorious promotion to corporal, Sept. 2, 2000. Photo by Cpl. Tisha Carter





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## Noon Softball Championships

# MALS-11 Posse reigns as champions for 2nd year

By Cpl. Mike Camacho

CPAO, MCAS Miramar

Marine Air Logistics Squadron 11's "Posse" dislodged 4th Tank Battalion's "Tank'd Up" 18-13 in the noon softball championship game Dec. 1.

The Posse is last year's champion and hasn't lost a game in 2 years. During this championship game it was evident that they weren't about to start.

"Our guys stepped up to the plate all season long and weren't about to lose. Tank'd Up started to come back, but that's when our guys had to put the hammer back down," said Ken P. Lockwood, Posse shortstop and third baseman.

While Posse's skills seemed too much for the Tanks, they still had a great season and placed as the runners up for the championship.

"We did good. We made it all the way to the championships. We got close but not close enough," said Terry L. Blalock, Tank'd Up coach and 1st baseman. Meanwhile, Posse didn't hesitate to bring in the runs scoring five in the first inning. Tank'd Up went up to bat only to be sat down without scoring.

In the second inning, Posse scored three more runs to tally their score at eight. Tank'd Up answered back scoring two.

Tank'd Up only allowed Posse one run in the third inning, but in their half of the inning, Tank'd Up didn't score any.

Posse went out in the fourth inning and scored another three runs taking their score up to 12, and then once again the defense stifled Tanks, which was running only on fumes by now.

However, Tank'd Up had enough. They allowed Posse only one run in the fifth inning. Posse must have underestimated Tank'd Up because they took off with 7 runs tightening the score to 13-9.

During the last inning Tank'd Up was crushed. Posse wasn't pleased with the inning prior, so they made up for it with five more runs. Tank'd Up gave it all they had and got four more runs, but it just wasn't enough to take the undefeated Posse.



Posse's pitcher James McTigue swings in the noon softball championship game where the undefeated Posse claimed their title as champions for the 2nd year.

Photo by  
Cpl. Mike  
Camacho




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- The Single Marine Program's Off Base Adventures schedule
- Pizza Pizzazz Monthly Specials Menu
- Base Theater Schedule with synopses

**Check it out today!**



# Holiday travel tips

With the holidays around the corner and anxious travelers on the road, here are a few tips to keep in mind while driving.

- Ensure that you get a good night's sleep and start out refreshed. Don't leave immediately after working all day.
- Have a road map, flashlight, and tool kit packed and make sure you have a good spare tire and a working jack.
- Pull over every couple of hours to take a break if driving alone, if traveling with others, switch drivers. Don't chance driving while fatigued.
- Allow yourself plenty of travel time in both directions. Don't plan on driving to "beat the clock" to get back just in time to go back to work.
- Make sure you have your leave papers, ID card, license, registration, proof of insurance, adequate funds and phone number for your quarterdeck or duty office.
- If you have small children in the car, ensure they are properly restrained in child safety seats.
- Make sure all passengers are buckled up.
- If fatigue sets in and you're not going to make it back, call for an extension of your leave, tell the duty office where you are and check in to a motel and get some sleep! Don't drive drowsy.
- And naturally don't drink and drive.

For more information contact the station safety office at (858) 577-1359 or speak to your section safety representative.

### Holiday Magic

Holiday Magic Happens tomorrow at 12 p.m. and it starts with live onstage entertainment, carnival rides and games, and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus by Marine helicopter.

Kids will have a chance to get a photo with Santa and meet characters from Legoland and Sea World as well as Ronald McDonald. Enjoy a free hot dog with chips and punch, a petting zoo, clowns, dancers, prizes and more!

Starting at 4 p.m., the 3rd MAW Band will perform across the street in the Theater for two hours with quartets, ensembles, a rock band, Dixieland, marching band and more, including an audience sing-along of

Holiday favorites. After the concert, everyone is welcome to join in the Base Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at 6:15 p.m. If you have any questions, please call 577-6365.

### Freebies of the Week

Dec. 4-8: Register at the Youth Center, Bldg. 2247, for a chance to win a family four-pack of tickets to Legoland! Call 577-4136 for more information.

Dec. 11-15: Entertainment Tickets has a drawing for two \$50 gift certificates which can be used toward any of their great travel getaways. Register to win at Bldg. 2524, or call 577-4126.

### Holiday spending stress

Contact Tom Graneau, MCCS Financial Management Counselor, to schedule a free 30-minute presentation on how to ease the stress of holiday shopping. Call 577-9802.

### Library story time

Children's Story time continues every Thursday. Stories with different themes will be read, and arts and crafts are included. It's all free, for children of all ages. The program runs 30-45 minutes. For more information, call the Library at 577-1261, or visit their Web page at [www.mccsmiramar.com/library.html](http://www.mccsmiramar.com/library.html).

### Semper Fit gets new hours

The Semper Fit Fitness Center is now open from 4:30 a.m. to midnight, Sunday through Thursday, and 4:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

### Toys for Tots

The San Diego Chapter of Toys For Tots is looking for motivated Marines to assist with our Celebrity Golf Shootout Dec. 9 and 10 at Admiral Baker Field Golf Course. Volunteers will muster at the Navy-Marine Corps Reserve Training Center, 9955 Pomerado Road, San Diego at 0600 both days for transportation to and from the golf course.

The uniform for this event is camouflage

Free

Movies

<p><b>Today</b></p> <p><i>Legend of the Drunken Master</i> (R) 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>Meet the Parents</i> (PG-13) 8:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Saturday</b></p> <p><i>The Little Vampire</i> (PG) 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>Meet the Parents</i> (PG-13) 8:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Sunday</b></p> <p><i>The Little Vampire</i> (PG) 1:00 p.m.</p> <p><i>The Contender</i> (R) 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <p><i>Bedazzled</i> (PG-13) 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Thursday</b></p> <p><i>The Little Vampire</i> (PG) 2:00 p.m.</p> <p><i>Blair Witch 2</i> (R) 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Friday</b></p> <p><i>Blair Witch 2</i> (R) 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>Legend of the Drunken Master</i> (R) 8:30 p.m.</p>
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### Desert Knight,

continued from page 1

forces,” added Battaglini.

The MEB was recently brought back to life when the commandant pioneered its reinstatement. Last year was 1st MEB's first participation in Exercise Desert Knight. It focused on the MEB's capability to rapidly deploy. This year's exercise not only tweaked and improved on last year's lessons learned, but also focused on exercising command and control of the MEB's major subordinate commands from large distances.

“We improved off of last year's Desert Knight by employing a new Tactical Air Command Center configuration. This new configuration focuses on a 30-day capability and has a tremendously lighter footprint,” said Gentry. “We accomplished a significant reduction in lift requirements from last year's by 20 tons.”

With regard to the MEB's principal objective, MWCS-38 and 9th Communications Battalion combined resources to provide the MEB ACE with single- and multi-channel radio, satellite, and digital communications. Also, MWCS-38's efforts tied the ACE communications structure into all other MAGTF elements. The TACC used these communications pipes to conduct battle staff training with other MAGTF elements.

“The TACC did an outstanding job,” said Gentry. “This was the first time the Theater Battle Management Core System was used outside of a training or testing environment.” The TBMC system is a tool to build and

utilities and morning and afternoon meals will be provided. Volunteers should coordinate within their respective units and provide a list of personnel, with a point of contact, to Gunnery Sgt. Helms at 577-8066 or [helmsr@mfr.usmc.mil](mailto:helmsr@mfr.usmc.mil).

### Library gets new hours

The library is now open from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

The library is closed on Sundays and holidays. Children's story time is every Thursday at 2 p.m. Stories with different themes are read, and arts and crafts are included. It's all free, for children of all ages.

The program runs 30-45 minutes. For more information, call the library at 577-1261, or visit their Web page at [www.mccsmiramar.com/library.html](http://www.mccsmiramar.com/library.html).

### All-Marine Trials are scheduled

All-Marine Trials are scheduled as follows:

*Boxing: Jan. 8-12 at MCB Camp Lejeune*  
*Bowling: Feb. 4-10 at MCB Camp Lejeune*  
*Taekwondo: Feb. 6-18 at Fort Indiantown, Pa.*  
*Cross Country: Feb. 20-25 (TBD)*  
*Wrestling: Feb. 1-Mar. 6 at MCB Quantico*

Anyone interested in the All-Marine Trials needs to submit a resume packet into the Athletic Office ASAP. For info call 577-1202.

monitor air-tasking orders.

Even though Desert Knight ended Wednesday, MWCS-38 and MTACS-38 are participating in Steel Knight that's ongoing and ends tomorrow. Steel Knight is a field exercise with live-fire training. With the successful completion of Desert Knight, the Marines in the field know they can count on the efforts of the ACE during this exercise or a real-world contingency.

### Sgt. Maj.,

continued from page 3

lives and forget why we swore that oath in the first place. I know that there is not an overwhelming love for the military these days. It is hard to remember the last time I went off-base when I didn't encounter at least one turned up nose, a “Hurumph”, or an “Oh God, not another Marine.” But that's why I'm here. To help defend the freedoms that allow them to scoff at me. That group of people and a simple thank-you from a half-pint kid reminded me why I joined.

To those of you still serving, I want to thank you. Not everyone in the country may respect you, but I do. I am very proud to be a part of your team...a part of the finest fighting force in the world. To those of you who came before me, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. If it were not for the sacrifices you made, I would not be here today making the sacrifices I make to help defend our beautiful country so that young boy could grow up as I did ... free.

Semper Fi,  
 Etienne “TN” Sullivan, Sgt. USMC





## Going the extra mile –

Marine Corps and Navy join forces to help homeless. Lance Cpl. Moises Garcia, cryptography graphic technician for Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38 carries a mattress from a truck for homeless veterans' use. Marines and Sailors from various units of 1st Marine Division and 3d Marine Aircraft Wing assist St. Vincent DePaul's Shelter and Rehab Center unload 150 beds and mattresses into a large tent next to the San Diego Post Office on

Midway Drive Dec. 1. Homeless veterans will be welcomed in from the cold starting Dec. 15. The Veterans Association will provide counseling and medical services to the guests as well as food will be provided by St. Vincent DePaul Village. "We're not only defending the country, we're giving the country something to defend," said Cpl. Walt Baety, microwave technician, Marine Wing Communication Squadron 38. The shelter program is scheduled to end near the end of April.

*Photo by Cpl. Scott Whittington*

## Weather, continued from page 6

and cloud coverage. They may even be able to eyeball the cloud heights. I'd say eyes combined with experience are the best tools."

In order to gain the experience needed and learn to use the advanced technology, these Marines must go through some weather training starting with the three-month long Weather Observers' Course at Keisler Air Force Base, Miss. Because most Marines come to the course without any knowledge of weather, the school starts with the basics. Once they graduate the observers know enough to record conditions accurately, which helps the forecasters do their jobs.

Once observers acquire enough experience and meet the requirements, they go through the eight-month long Weather Forecasters' Course where they get more in-depth training. Students at this course learn everything from physics and dynamics to oceanography and satellite interpretation.

The enormous amount of education these Marines receive, combined with their experience and cutting-edge technology ensure that all of 3d MAW's as well as Miramar's assets are protected from the elements.

## Housing, continued from page 2

to 28 percent of your gross monthly income, and it, combined with your other monthly debt payments, cannot add up to more than 36 percent. The latter part of this equation will pose a problem for those with large car payments, credit card bills or student loans.

If you have all four requirements – two years of steady work history, good credit, a little nest egg and enough gross monthly income – then you are ready to go home shopping.

If you don't fit the paradigm for the perfect homebuyer, don't stress. There are more exceptions and loopholes to these rules than there are homes in San Diego. Worst-case scenario, maybe you'll just have to wait until your next duty station.

Hopefully, the preceding list of advantages of buying a home has convinced you that if right now isn't the right time for you to buy, that you should want to purchase as soon as possible. Renting should be a purgatory where you plod your time preparing to purchase a home.

For a free counseling session with one of the most qualified real estate agents in San Diego, or if you would like to arrange a home buying class for your unit, call Chuck Dudley at (619) 556-9970.